

THE MENTORING CHILDREN OF PRISONERS RELATIONSHIP QUALITY INSTRUMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT TOOL

Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau

Relationship Quality Instrument

- Purpose
- Administration
- Use of Data
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- Instrument Content
- Walk-through
- Support: We're in this together!
- Q&A

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Purpose

- One way to gauge MCP Program efficacy is to assess the actual quality of youth/mentor relationships.
- The Relationship Quality Instrument (RQI), a set of 20 questions about youths' perceptions of their relationships with mentors, will achieve this goal.

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Administration

- The RQI will be administered to all youth who have been in mentoring relationships of 9 months +
 - Shorter relationships are less likely to have had time to "gel."
 - Research shows that positive outcomes are associated with longer-lasting relationships (9-12 months).
- Interviewers will obtain parental permission for conducting the RQI.
 - Interviewers will obtain this permission from parents/guardians over the telephone.
 - They will read a short statement describing the study and check (on the data collection form) that they have received parental consent.

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Administration

- Interviewers will administer the RQI...
 - From July – September 29, 2006
 - To *all* youth in relationships of 9 months + (No exceptions: youth of all ages; even youth who are hard to reach)
 - Over the telephone
 - Without other adults (parents/mentors) present
- Responses will be kept confidential.
 - FYSB (OLDC) will generate anonymous ID numbers for youth.
 - Responses will be recorded in an OLDC database
 - Responses may not be shared with mentors, parents or other adults, unless a youth indicates that s/he is in danger of serious harm.

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Use of Data

- Data will describe MCP Program's ability to cultivate high quality youth/mentor relationships.
- This, together with data about total numbers of youth served and in mentoring relationships of 9 months +, will present a comprehensive picture of Program activity.
- Programs may use data for program management (to determine if program is cultivating quality relationships and to take corrective action, if not).
- Programs also may use data for case management (to identify common mentor or youth challenges and develop or modify supports as necessary) and, ultimately, to strengthen youth/mentor connections.

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Instrument Background

- Like other relationships, mentoring relationships can vary in:
 - Duration
 - Closeness
 - Trust
 - Mutuality (mutual empathy and understanding)
- Relationship quality (as indicated by characteristics like closeness, trust, mutuality) is linked to positive youth outcomes.

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Instrument Background

- Instrument Development, Participants:
 - 347 youth from P/PV study of Big Brothers Big Sisters
 - > 70% at least 3 months; 54.4% at least 12
 - 55.3% members of a minority group
 - Average age: 12.10 yrs.
- Instrument Development: Questionnaire
 - Based on previous qualitative work (Morrow & Styles, 1995)
 - Original scale contained 74 items
 - Administered at 18 months
 - Tapped both positive (N=51) and negative (N=23) impressions

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Instrument Background

- Current RQI contains 20 items about relationship quality (several other questions about participant characteristics).
- How were these items identified?
 - Questions were derived from another scale that had been used successfully in an evaluation of youth/mentor relationships.
 - Statistical methods were used to reduce the number of questions from 74.
 - Having fewer questions makes it easier to administer the survey (fewer questions = less time for the interview.)
 - This new scale has been tested and shown to demonstrate relationship quality effectively.

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Instrument Background

Developing the Scale

- Follow-up analyses revealed that relationship quality was associated with:
 - Longer lasting relationships and, above the effects of duration,
 - Higher levels of scholastic competence, and
 - Higher levels of self-worth

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Instrument Content

- Many of the questions on relationship quality are negatively worded, because those items proved most reliable predictors of outcomes. Why?
 - Damaging effects of disappointment and mistrust on relationships
 - Negative effects outweigh positive
 - Many already have experienced disappointment
 - Data analytic process
 - Greater variability on negative
 - Acrimony in mentoring association with termination

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Walk-Through

- Four Sections:
 - 1A: General questions about your program
 - Should be completed before interviewing youth
 - Does not need to be completed more than once
 - Questions/Definitions
 - 1B: Data about current (as of July 1) caseload
 - Necessary to confirm the accuracy of data already recorded in OLDC
 - Also should be completed before interviewing youth
 - Also, does not need to be completed more than once
 - Questions/Definitions

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Walk-Through

- Four Sections:
 - II: Questions about "this child"
 - May be completed before interviewing youth
 - Should be completed using information from case files, etc. as long as that information is accurate
 - Can be completed as part of youth-interview if not
 - Must be completed for each youth surveyed
 - Some fields will fill-in automatically
 - Questions/Definitions

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Walk-Through

- Four Sections:
 - II, Relationship Quality Instrument
 - Parental permission
 - Parental presence
 - The Instrument
 - Definitions for response categories
 - After the survey is complete, submit it on-line and retain a hard-copy in a secure location (for your records).
 - Reminder: Attempt to complete a telephone survey for every youth in your program who has been meeting with the same youth for 9 months or more as of July 1, 2006.
 - Reminder: All completed surveys are due on-line by September 29, 2006.
 - Reminder: Please keep results confidential!

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Relationship Quality Instrument, Support

- You are not alone!
 - FAQs (including definitions of key terms)
 - On-line support
 - OLDC support
 - 1-866-577-0771
 - App_support@acf.hhs.gov

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